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March 30, 2011

2011 AB 24 (The Bear Bill)

This bill was originally introduced two years ago. A series of hearings were held on the bill. However, because the Conservation Congress did not have a position supporting or opposing the bill, we did not testify on the merits or faults of the bill. Nor were we able to testify with information about the public perceptions of the proposed legislation, as we had no such information to share.

In December of 2009, the Bear Study Committee of the Conservation Congress felt that the public should have an opportunity to weigh in on the proposal. They placed five advisory questions on the 2010 spring hearings questionnaire. Each question asked those voting to support or reject one of the five components of this bill. To help you in your deliberations, we are providing the results of those five questions here today. They are listed in order from most supported to most opposed.

Raising the age requirement for Class "B" permits

The statewide vote for this question was 2090 in support, 1482 opposed. It carried in 53 counties, and the vote was tied in 6.

All bear hunting with hounds, and the vast majority of all bear hunting in Wisconsin takes place in bear management zones A, B, and D. Those units are composed of all or parts of 21 counties. In cases like this, the vote should be examined to assure that there is no regional bias for support or opposition within or outside of the area in which most bear hunting takes place. Of those 21 counties, Bayfield, Ashland, and Iron Counties opposed this component of the bill, and tie votes were recorded in Florence and Washburn Counties. This level of support is very similar to the support found outside of the primary bear management area.

The public strongly supported the proposal to raise the age requirement for Class "B" permits.

Backup shooter for bear hunting

The statewide vote for this question was 1464 in support, 2232 opposed. It carried in 21 counties. A tie vote was recorded in one county.

6 counties within the primary bear area supported the question, indicating no bias for the question within or outside the bear zone.

The public fairly strongly opposed this question. Most who spoke in opposition were concerned that the language in the bill would make it possible for hunters to allow others (perhaps for a fee) to shoot their bear. However, there has been interest for some time in allowing a backup shooter in cases where the licensed shooter is a youth. Now, the youth mentoring bill which passed in 2009, allows ten year olds to hunt. We feel that there is a real need to allow a backup shooter in such cases, and a solution which is palatable to the public should be sought.

Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class "B" permit

The statewide vote on this question was 1465 in support, 2170 opposed. It carried in 18 counties. Tie votes were recorded in two counties.

6 counties within the primary bear area supported the question, indicating no bias for the question within or outside the bear zone.

The public fairly strongly opposed the proposal to create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class "B" permit.

Elimination of the Class "B" bear license back tag

The statewide vote on this question was 1258 in support, 2257 opposed. It carried in only 7 counties. Tie votes were recorded in three counties.

2 counties within the primary bear area supported the question, indicating no bias for the question within or outside the bear zone.

The public strongly opposed the proposal to eliminate the Class "B" bear license back tag. Some speaking in opposition felt that the back tag requirement was an important part of the compromise which allowed hound hunting for bears to continue amid a swell of trespass complaints in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

Training of hounds during the bear harvest season


The statewide vote on this question was 652 in support, 2995 opposed. A tie vote was recorded in Iowa County. All 71 remaining counties, including all 21 counties in the primary bear management area opposed this question.

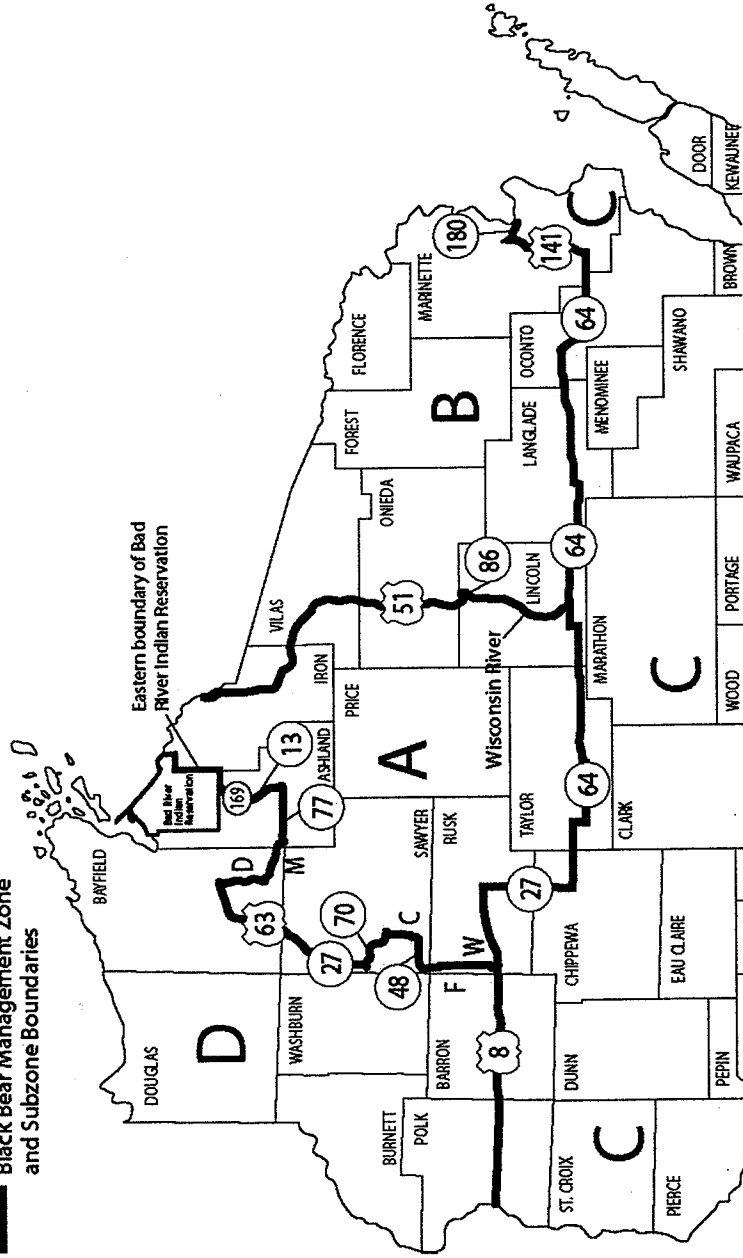
The voters who attended the 2010 spring hearings were clearly opposed to the proposal to allow training of dogs during the bear harvest season.

Sincerely,

Edgar Harvey, Jr., Chairman
Wisconsin Conservation Congress

As established by Wisconsin State Statutes, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.

 Black Bear Management Zone
 and Subzone Boundaries



(Zone C extends south to Wisconsin-Illinois State Line)

ADAMS (01)					ASHLAND (02)			BARRON (03)		
Question	Question Description	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	7	9	No	16	55	No	24	16	Yes
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	2	14	No	4	65	No	12	30	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	8	7	Yes	30	41	No	29	11	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	4	13	No	16	57	No	20	24	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	5	12	No	14	53	No	16	28	No

BAYFIELD (04)					BROWN (05)			BUFFALO (06)		
Question	Question Description	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	8	34	No	33	57	No	12	12	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	4	38	No	13	73	No	5	21	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	19	24	No	50	32	Yes	15	10	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	15	28	No	31	58	No	15	11	Yes
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	9	29	No	32	57	No	11	15	No

BURNETT (07)					CALUMET (08)			CHIPPEWA (09)		
Question	Question Description	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	8	7	Yes	14	28	No	14	23	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	2	13	No	7	34	No	10	27	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	14	1	Yes	19	20	No	27	10	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	6	9	No	17	22	No	16	21	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	6	7	No	19	19	No	14	20	No

CLARK (10)					COLUMBIA (11)			CRAWFORD (12)		
Question	Question Description	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	8	21	No	24	30	No	6	3	Yes
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	13	16	No	9	45	No	3	6	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	15	13	Yes	22	34	No	9	1	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	20	8	Yes	14	43	No	6	5	Yes
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	20	7	Yes	20	34	No	3	7	No

DANE (13)					DODGE (14)			DOOR (15)		
Question	Question Description	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	60	148	No	18	29	No	27	16	Yes
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	14	190	No	5	44	No	5	37	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	84	118	No	19	29	No	27	13	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	53	152	No	18	33	No	28	15	Yes
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	37	162	No	8	44	No	10	29	No

Question	Question Description	DOUGLAS (16)		DUNN (17)		EAU CLAIRE (18)	
		Votes Yes	Majority	Votes Yes	Majority	Votes Yes	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	9	No	12	No	14	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	8	No	6	No	5	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	14	Yes	18	Yes	16	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	10	No	9	No	12	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	9	No	13	No	13	No

Question	Question Description	FLORENCE (19)		FOND DU LAC (20)		FOREST (21)	
		Votes Yes	Majority	Votes Yes	Majority	Votes Yes	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	10	No	21	No	10	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	2	No	4	No	5	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	15	Yes	29	Yes	22	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	5	No	18	No	19	Yes
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	8	No	22	No	13	No

Question	Question Description	GRANT (22)		GREEN (23)		GREEN LAKE (24)	
		Votes Yes	Majority	Votes Yes	Majority	Votes Yes	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	14	No	13	No	15	Yes
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	4	No	9	No	2	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	33	Yes	20	Yes	14	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	30	Yes	22	Yes	13	Yes
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	25	Yes	8	No	8	No

Question	Question Description	IOWA (25)		IRON (26)		JACKSON (27)	
		Votes Yes	Majority	Votes Yes	Majority	Votes Yes	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	28	Yes	6	No	4	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	23	Yes	3	No	3	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	34	Yes	10	No	6	No
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	18	No	13	No	5	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	21	No	8	No	5	No

Question	Question Description	JEFFERSON (28)		JUNEAU (29)		KENOSHA (30)	
		Votes Yes	Majority	Votes Yes	Majority	Votes Yes	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	22	No	16	Yes	21	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	13	No	13	No	13	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	43	Yes	25	Yes	26	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	26	No	15	No	28	Yes
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	21	No	14	No	17	No

Question	Question Description	KEWAUNEE (31)			LA CROSSE (32)			LAFAYETTE (33)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	12	22	No	18	27	No	18	13	Yes
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	9	25	No	7	37	No	4	28	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	19	15	Yes	22	19	Yes	22	10	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	19	14	Yes	17	27	No	21	12	Yes
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	21	12	Yes	5	39	No	16	15	Yes

Question	Question Description	LANGLADE (34)			LINCOLN (35)			MANITOWOC (36)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	22	24	No	23	31	No	18	35	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	11	35	No	10	45	No	12	42	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	27	18	Yes	36	21	Yes	29	25	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	16	32	No	24	32	No	24	31	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	19	25	No	25	28	No	20	36	No

Question	Question Description	MARATHON (37)			MARINETTE (38)			MARQUETTE (39)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	24	43	No	21	14	Yes	9	10	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	8	66	No	14	21	No	2	17	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	45	23	Yes	27	9	Yes	10	9	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	19	51	No	20	16	Yes	5	15	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	22	41	No	13	22	No	3	16	No

Question	Question Description	MENOMINEE (40)			MILWAUKEE (41)			MONROE (42)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	5	2	Yes	55	97	No	20	16	Yes
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	1	6	No	23	132	No	8	28	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	5	1	Yes	70	83	No	24	12	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	1	6	No	48	110	No	19	18	Yes
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	1	5	No	41	113	No	15	22	No

Question	Question Description	OCONTO (43)			ONEIDA (44)			OUTAGAMIE (45)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	23	28	No	51	42	Yes	24	37	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	17	33	No	30	59	No	8	52	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	36	14	Yes	71	17	Yes	31	22	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	24	27	No	45	48	No	25	37	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	21	28	No	43	46	No	23	36	No

Question	Question Description	OZAUKEE (46)			PEPIN (47)			PIERCE (48)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	14	29	No	5	11	No	11	16	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	7	40	No	3	13	No	2	23	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	25	17	Yes	8	8	Yes	14	12	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	18	30	No	4	12	No	5	23	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	15	26	No	7	9	No	4	22	No

Question	Question Description	POLK (49)			PORTAGE (50)			PRICE (51)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	28	23	Yes	65	68	No	11	24	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	17	33	No	32	101	No	8	27	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	40	9	Yes	76	54	Yes	24	13	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	30	20	Yes	58	73	No	15	22	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	21	28	No	47	83	No	19	16	Yes

Question	Question Description	RACINE (52)			RICHLAND (53)			ROCK (54)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	15	36	No	4	11	No	10	31	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	7	44	No	1	16	No	5	35	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	28	23	Yes	9	6	Yes	21	19	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	19	28	No	6	10	No	18	23	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	23	24	No	4	11	No	15	20	No

Question	Question Description	RUSK (55)			SAINT CROIX (56)			SAUK (57)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	16	18	No	22	27	No	15	23	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	9	25	No	13	36	No	4	37	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	20	14	Yes	32	17	Yes	24	12	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	18	16	Yes	22	28	No	7	36	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	12	20	No	11	39	No	13	23	No

Question	Question Description	SAWYER (58)			SHAWANO (59)			SHEBOYGAN (60)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	23	64	No	25	25	No	55	52	Yes
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	10	81	No	15	36	No	20	86	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	45	44	Yes	41	9	Yes	79	30	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	42	52	No	29	21	Yes	41	72	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	30	43	No	28	21	Yes	49	61	No

Question	Question Description	TAYLOR (61)			TREMPEALEAU (62)			VERNON (63)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	7	20	No	10	7	Yes	10	19	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	4	25	No	2	16	No	4	26	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	16	11	Yes	12	5	Yes	15	13	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	18	12	Yes	9	9	No	12	18	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	18	13	Yes	7	10	No	12	16	No

Question	Question Description	VILAS (64)			WALWORTH (65)			WASHBURN (66)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	34	47	No	11	27	No	18	13	Yes
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	15	67	No	5	35	No	5	22	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	43	25	Yes	14	26	No	14	14	No
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	39	38	Yes	13	27	No	17	12	Yes
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	23	49	No	14	26	No	8	17	No

Question	Question Description	WASHINGTON (67)			WAUKESHA (68)			WAUPACA (69)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	82	53	Yes	34	95	No	31	56	No
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	13	121	No	23	108	No	12	80	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	100	37	Yes	70	53	Yes	37	51	No
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	43	90	No	37	91	No	34	62	No
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	36	98	No	29	95	No	31	55	No

Question	Question Description	WAUSHARA (70)			WINNEBAGO (71)			WOOD (72)		
		Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority
62	Create a free weekend to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license	9	11	No	26	75	No	37	16	Yes
63	Training of hounds during the bear harvest season	3	18	No	5	99	No	23	28	No
64	Raising the age requirement for Class B permits	14	6	Yes	46	53	No	37	15	Yes
65	Backup shooter for bear hunting	7	14	No	23	81	No	33	18	Yes
66	Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag	7	14	No	35	65	No	22	29	No



Wisconsin Bear Hunters' Association, Inc.

MEMO

March 28, 2011

To: Members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee

PLEASE SUPPORT AB 24 – the “2011 Wisconsin Bear Bill”

The Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association (WBHA) would like to strongly encourage your support for AB 24, the “2011 Wisconsin Bear Bill”. This bill also enjoys the full support of the **Hunters Rights Coalition**.

This bill proposes several much needed changes to how bear hunting is conducted in Wisconsin. It creates a new “try it for free” weekend for bear dog training in August. It lowers the age for an exemption from paying a fee for a Class B bear license from 16 to 12. Bear Hunting is truly a family sport and this will ensure more kids in the woods.

For safety reasons, this bill will allow someone holding a Class B license to act as a “back-up shooter” in case the first attempt has created a dangerous situation.

The bill removes the discriminatory requirement for Class B participants to wear a back tag. These participants are not hunting – only the Class A license holder is the hunter and that person will still be required to wear a back tag.

Finally, the bill will allow Class B participation in dog training during the actually hunting season – allowing those who plan their year around bear season up north to continue their sport even after a harvest tag is filled.

The bear hunting community has spent a lot of time and effort over the last few years making sure that we are united in pursuing these proposed changes. For example, the Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association recently took a position in favor of the bill.

Please join Wisconsin’s Bear Hunters in supporting this very important, common sense proposal.

For more information please contact our representative: Bob Welch 608-819-0150

AB 24 TESTIMONY

Submitted by: Al Lobner, Milladore, Wisconsin

Thank you Chairman Mursau and members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee for allowing me time to testify in favor of AB 24. As many of you have heard the elements of this bill were on the Wisconsin Conservation Congress 2010 Spring Questionnaire. My testimony does not dispute the findings of those questions but to educate you on how this process came to fruition.

Initially the elements of the Bear Bill AB 371 were presented to the WCC Hunting with Dogs Committee at their August 14, 2009 meeting and although there was no action taken Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association members present at that meeting were assured by WCC Chairman Edgar Harvey that the "Congress" would take no position on this Bill as it was Statutory in nature and could not be taken care of through Administrative Rule from the Department. We as an organization took him for his word.

Subsequently at the December 4, 2009 Bear Committee Meeting the question of AB 371 was again brought up by Bear Committee Chairman Richard Kirchmeyer. For your information Mr. Kirchmeyer is a Department of Natural Resources licensed bear hunting guide. I reminded Chairman Kirchmeyer that WCC Chairman Harvey had said the WCC would take no position on this bill and his response to me at that time was "We are now".

At this point the elements of the bill were discussed at great length and were forwarded to the Executive Council to be considered for the 2010 Spring Questionnaire at their January 8, 2010 meeting. The Bear Committee meeting was exceptionally difficult because quite frankly most members did not understand the elements of the bill and had many misconceptions of what the bill really was. My feelings at this point was without some clarification of the bill at the Executive Council meeting this was going to certainly be an uphill battle, so I made it a point to attend the Executive Council Meeting that January 8, 2010.

I did attend the January 8, 2010 Executive Council meeting along with many other authors of these questions and resolutions. There were several other DNR personnel there as committee liaisons as well as the DNR Secretary and others. At the beginning of the meeting there was a seminar on Roberts Rules of Order and a discussion on Open Meetings Records given by Kari Zimmerman and Kurt Thiede. After this presentation the Executive Council began to go over what questions would be on the questionnaire.

Authors of these questions as well as Committees liaisons and other DNR personnel were often times asked questions about the content of these questions and invited to speak on the questions behalf. When the meeting came to the point of the contents of AB 371 or the Bear Bill Questions Chairman Harvey announced that he would not allow any comment or input regarding these questions but did have a letter that was previously submitted by the Wisconsin Bow Hunters Association and at that time he relayed the contents of that letter to the Executive Council. As a member of the WCC Bear

Committee as well as a member of the Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association and a passionate bear hunter I tried strenuously at this point to gain the floor to speak about the contents of the questions, but was not given the floor to speak.

Although it is not indicated in the minutes of the January 8, 2010 Executive Council meeting these questions were put on the Spring Questionnaire. FYI the Bear Committee Chairman, Rich Kirchmeyer, is also the Secretary of the Executive Council. As you may or may not know all 72 counties in the state of Wisconsin hold their respective Spring Hearings on the same day in their respective counties. Unfortunately for those proponents of the Bear Bill due to the structure of the WCC process we are not able to ensure that the correct information is delivered in all counties at these hearings. It is my feeling that these actions along with the misinformation that spread with them doomed the possibility of these questions ever passing on that questionnaire.

Although I will not speak on these questions I have included them on my testimony. After reading them I think you will agree with me that some are very editorial and misleading in nature and do not really deliver the real content of this bill.

Thank you for your time and if you have any questions I would be happy to answer them as best as I can and thank you again.

BEAR STUDY COMMITTEE ADVISORY QUESTIONS

Legislation was introduced in 2009 that included a number of proposals that are meant to make some regulations that pertain to bear hound training and bear hunting less restrictive, or are intended to create more opportunity to be able to get involved in bear hunting or training of hounds on bear. Each of the following questions is a stand alone question and each represents one of the five major components of this legislation.

QUESTION 62 – Create a free weekend to be able to train hounds on bear without a Class B bear license

This first component of the bill would set aside one weekend during the month of August when a person would be allowed to train hounds on bear without having purchased a Class B bear training license. This would be similar to other license-free weekend events already established, such as the free fishing weekend in June. State law requires that anyone participating in bear hound dog training, placement of bait for bear dog training or bear hunting purposes and or assisting a Class A bear license holder in locating a bear to possess a Class B bear license. A Class B bear license provides all the same privileges of a Class A bear license except that it does not allow the holder to shoot, shoot at or kill a bear. This free weekend could create an opportunity for non-bear hunting persons to participate in and experience (but would not be able to harvest a bear without a Class A bear harvest license) the sport of bear hunting without having to purchase a Class B license.

Would you support establishing one weekend in August when a Class B license would not be required to participate in bear hunting or hound training?

62. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 63 – Training of hounds during the harvest season

During the bear harvest season a group of hound hunters must have at least one person with a valid Class A bear harvest license to run their hounds. Some hound hunters simply wish to run their hounds and are not interested in harvesting a bear. Houndsmen have many hours invested in training and many dollars invested in care for their hounds through out the year. This would not allow hounds to be run during the period of time when only bait hunting is allowed. This proposal would likely result in more hounds in the woods during the open bear hunting season simply for the purpose of pursuing bears and not harvesting a bear. The department and some non-dog bear hunters are concerned that this might have the unintended consequence of increasing conflicts between the individual who uses dogs for training purposes, and those bear hunters who are out trying to hunt a bear without the use of dogs.

Would you be in favor of allowing the training of hounds on bear during the portion of the bear season that allows the use of hounds to harvest bear with out being in possession of a Class A harvest permit?

63. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 64 – Raising the age requirement for Class B permits

Currently, anyone age 12 or older must possess a Class B bear license to place bait for bear, handle bear dogs during bear dog training or bear hunting activities, or otherwise assist a holder of a Class A bear license in locating a bear. In this day and age as we are trying to recruit and retain youth into the outdoor sports we need every opportunity and ability to be able to accomplish this. This proposal would increase the age at which a Class B bear license is required from age 12 to age 16. Allowing youth under age 16 to participate without a license, just as youth under 12 are currently allowed to do would be consistent with other initiatives the department has supported to facilitate getting more youth into the sport of hunting. Proponents of this proposal feel that any loss in license revenue would pale in comparison the benefits of introducing young hunters to bear hunting. They see this as a good investment in the future of hunting.

Would you be in favor of allowing youth under the age of 16 to have the ability to participate in the training and the hunting of bear without having to purchase a Class B permit?

64. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 65 – Backup shooter

Currently, only the holder of a Class A bear harvest license can legally shoot at a bear. The proposed legislation would expand the current privileges provided to those who hold a Class B bear license to allow them to shoot and kill a bear that was first shot, but not killed, by the holder of a Class A bear license. Proponents of the proposed legislation cite two primary reasons for allowing the concept of a backup shooter. Having a backup shooter would assure that the bear is harvested in the quickest and most humane manner possible. The second reason is safety. A wounded bear could have the ability to injure hounds and hunters. The safety of all involved in the hunt and the humane dispatch of the animal are the biggest and are the most important reasons for wanting a backup shooter.

The DNR has several concerns about the effect such a change in the law would have. From a law enforcement perspective, wardens have concerns about the ability to determine if the bear was legally harvested. The department feels that current common law already allows a person to protect themselves or others from a potentially dangerous wounded wild animal.

Would you be in favor of allowing the use of a backup shooter while bear hunting?

1. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 66 – Elimination of the Class B bear license back tag

State law currently requires that all persons involved in the pursuit of bear (i.e. assisting a Class A permit holder locate a bear, including the handling of hounds) must wear either a Class A or a Class B back tag displayed in the middle of their back on their outermost garment. The wearing of a back tag DOES NOT apply to hunters who are simply placing out bait for bears, or to persons under the age of 12 who may assist a Class A bear license holder without the need for a Class B bear license. Some bear hunters feel that the requirement that a Class B permit holder must wear a back tag is unnecessary. Temperatures during the training season, which starts on July 1st and runs through the last day of August, can change drastically from early morning to later in the day, let alone from the beginning of July to the end of August. This also is true during the harvest season. It makes it very inconvenient to continually change the back tag from one garment to another during the day or from day to day to stay legal.

According to law enforcement officials, the purpose of the back tags was and remains to help satisfy the concerns of landowners about hunters who trespass on their lands by providing the landowners with a means of identifying who is trespassing and allowing sheriff's deputies to track down such trespassers.

Note: Class A back tags would still be required for those bear hunters who hold a valid class A bear harvest license.

Would you support a legislative change to remove the requirement that all Class B permit holders wear a back tag during the bear training and or harvest seasons?

66. YES _____ NO _____